



## FACT SHEET

# The Voluntary Advanced Technology Incentives Program

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### Summary

*The effluent limitations set forth in the pulp and paper "cluster rule" are the first of their kind to encourage further environmental improvement through an innovative, voluntary incentives program. The Voluntary Advanced Technology Incentives Program allows interested mills to consider all technology options before making investment decisions. This program encourages mills to commit to advanced levels of environmental performance in exchange for extended compliance time and reduced regulatory burden. EPA expects that these incentives will encourage greater participation in the program which in turn will lead to superior effluent quality and greater environmental protection.*

*The Voluntary Advanced Technology Incentives Program is designed to achieve greater pollutant reductions than those achieved by only installing technology that helps mills control toxic discharges to water and meet the requirements of the rule. The goal of the program is to promote continuous improvement to achieve EPA's vision of the "mill of the future"--one which will have a minimum impact on the environment. This program gives pulp and paper mills a platform to advance the research and development of technologies and processes that provide greater environmental protection.*

### Program Objectives

The primary objective of this program is to encourage individual mills to install advanced pollution prevention technologies or make process changes that will further reduce releases of toxic pollutants to the environment beyond the limits set by this rule. It encourages mills to adopt advanced technologies by promoting the widespread use and perfection of technologies such as extended delignification and totally chlorine-free processes and the development of advanced technologies aimed at reducing bleach plant flow.

### How the Incentive Program Works

Participation in this program is voluntary and is only available to mills that discharge directly to surface waters. A mill has up to one year to

commit to the program and to submit a plan for achieving reduction limits. Mills enrolling in this program must meet the discharge limits set by this rule; however, they are allowed to develop a mill-specific compliance schedule associated with the type of advanced technology to be installed.

The program establishes three levels, or "tiers," of advanced technology performance requirements. Each tier has its own unique limitations and standards based on the underlying model technology particular to that level. The program contains performance requirements for each level that reflect the degree of environmental protection that can be achieved with increasing use of advanced technology.

Once enrolled, a mill is assigned to an appropriate tier. Then the water discharge permitting authority (either the state or EPA) develops specific discharge limits and key milestones consistent with that tier. A mill's performance is reviewed against these milestones and discharges are monitored to ensure compliance with the discharge permit.

#### Rewards and Incentives

Mills accepted into the program are subject to more stringent limitations but they are given rewards and incentives for participating. These rewards and incentives include additional time to comply with their pollutant discharge permit limitations. They also include reduced monitoring requirements, greater permit certainty, reduced inspections, and reduced penalties. These mills and the industry as a whole also receive public recognition for their commitment to increased environmental protection.

Mills accepting enforceable permit limits at one of the tier levels qualify for the incentives program at that level. Some mills are already well on their way to developing advanced pollution prevention and pollution control technologies that will result in increased environmental protection. In these instances the incentives actually serve as rewards for effluent reductions already achieved.

If the mills choose to participate in the incentives program, they will get 6 instead of 3 years to comply with the air standards included in the rule. The air standards provide for an extension of up to 8 years from promulgation for high volume vents at Kraft pulping processes. This extension is designed to encourage mills to install pollution prevention technology that will reduce toxic air pollutant emissions from the pulping process as well as both air and water pollutant discharges from the bleaching process.

EPA is also allowing additional time for facilities enrolled in the program to comply with water discharge permit limits: 6 years for facilities enrolled in Tier I, 11 years for facilities enrolled in Tier II, and 16 years for facilities enrolled in Tier III. EPA is granting additional time to these facilities to install, test, and implement, at full scale, the advanced technologies chosen by each mill.

As an additional incentive, EPA is offering public recognition to any mill that participates in the Voluntary Advanced Technology Program. Public recognition will continue as long as the mill meets their interim milestones and they achieve their ultimate tier limits.